### Parent Payments in Government Schools

The Education and Training Reform Act provides for free instruction in the standard curriculum program to all students in government schools. The Act also allows schools to charge fees to parents for goods & services provided by the school to a child.

Schools can request payment for:
- **Essential learning items** such as text books, stationery, ID cards, locks etc. Parents may choose to provide their own items where practical and appropriate.
- **Optional items** offered in addition to the standard curriculum, which you are not obligated to pay. These may include school magazines, class photos, music tuition, formals etc.

Schools may invite voluntary financial contributions for things such as a building or library fund but it is optional to pay it.

### Equipment

**Computers:** If parents choose not to purchase or lease a device, the school must provide a device for your child during the times it is required at school. Information about the personal devices policy can be found at the [DET website](http://education.vic.gov.au).

Low cost and refurbished computers can be purchased from:
- **Computerbank:** (03) 9600 9161
  - [www.computerbank.org.au](http://www.computerbank.org.au)
- **WorkVentures:** 1800 112 205

### Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund

Financial assistance provided by the Victorian Government and paid to the school to assist eligible families to cover the costs of camps, sport and excursions in primary and secondary school. Preps and Year 7’s need to register. Unused funds carry over to the next year, to a new school, to other siblings or to other families in need. Contact your school to make an application.

### How can my child’s school help?

If you are experiencing hardship, speak to the School Welfare Officer, Principal or nominated parent payment contact person about support options available. Your school can:

- Waive, reduce or defer school fees
- Extend deadlines or set up flexible payment plans
- Give you the opportunity to provide cheaper alternatives or similar materials where possible & practical
- Refer you to government/community assistance programs
- Refer you to State Schools’ Relief for uniforms & shoes
- Organise a second hand text book sale at school
- Provide a personal device at school if you cannot afford to buy or lease a device
- Provide interpreting and translation services

### Uniform and school shoes

State Schools’ Relief (SSR) provides assistance with uniforms, shoes & other items (such as scientific calculators and glasses) to students in need who are attending a Victorian government school. In 2019, Prep & Year 7 recipients of the Camps Sports & Excursion Fund (CSEF) automatically qualify for a uniform pack through SSR. Additional uniform assistance may also be available through their welfare program. Speak to your Principal or School Welfare Officer to apply.

[www.ssr.net.au](http://www.ssr.net.au)

### Travel Costs

**Student Pass:** Full time Victorian students attending an approved school can apply for a Student Pass through Public Transport Victoria. This may be cheaper than other Myki fares. Call 1800 800 007 or visit the PTV website.


**Travellers Aid (TAA):** Pathways to Education provides assistance with travel costs for disadvantaged students attending secondary school at an alternative setting (such as a community school or tertiary institution) and who are at risk of disengaging from education. Referrals are made by the school or social worker. Call 9654 2600 or visit their website.

[www.travellersaid.org.au](http://www.travellersaid.org.au)

**Conveyance Allowance Program (CAP):** Financial assistance to help families in rural and regional Victoria with the cost of transporting their children to their nearest government, non-government or specialist school. Contact your school for further information or visit the DET website.

**Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme:** Financial help for students who cannot attend a state school due to geographical isolation, special education needs, no reasonable access to school or changing circumstances. You may also be able to claim for the cost of home schooling your children. Call DHS on 132 318 or visit the Human Services website.
Child Care

Child Care Subsidy (CCS): A subsidy paid directly to child care providers to reduce the amount of child care fees you pay. Approved child care includes long day & occasional care, family day care, outside school hours care, vacation care & in home care. An eligible child must be 13 years or younger or 14-18 with a disability & meet immunisation requirements.

Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS): A top up payment in addition to CCS to help with the cost of approved child care. To qualify you must be transitioning to work from income support payments, be a grandparent in receipt of income support & a principal carer of your grandchildren, be experiencing temporary financial hardship, or require practical assistance to support your child’s safety & well-being. Apply online through myGov or call the DHS Families line on 136 150. www.humanservices.gov.au

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC): Provides care for primary school age children outside school hours and during school holidays. Talk to your school about what is available. School holiday care for secondary school students may be available in your area. Check with your local council.


Student Scholarships

The Department of Education and Training (DET) administers a range of student scholarships available to primary, secondary and tertiary students. Visit the DET website for information.

Community Organisations

Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)
Some member agencies provide support to families through their Back to School Program. Emergency relief, information and support is also available for families in need. www.cisvic.org.au

Smith Family Learning for Life
Support and financial assistance to help disadvantaged children stay at school. The program runs in select disadvantaged areas. www.thsmithfamily.com.au

A Start in Life
Financial assistance to disadvantaged students and families to ensure they can access the same learning opportunities as their peers. For information phone (02) 9264 3017. www.astartinlife.org.au

Opening the Doors Foundation
Education assistance for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in an independent educational institution in Victoria. www.openingthedoor.org.au

The Queen’s Fund
Financial assistance with the cost of educational expenses for children. Applications must be completed by a social worker or similar. www.queensfund.org.au

Microfinance Programs

Good Shepherd
Financial programs for people on low or limited incomes that may assist families with educational costs and other expenses. The No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) gives access to fair and safe credit (up to $1,200) for essential educational items. www.goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au

Saver Plus
Financial education and up to $500 in matched savings for education costs for individuals and families with regular income from work. For information phone 1300 610 355. www.bsl.org.au

Budget Planner

Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC)
ASIC’s Money Smart website has useful information on how to reduce back to school costs. It includes a comprehensive online budget planner to help families work out school expenses. www.moneysmart.gov.au

What can I do to reduce costs?

⇒ If you enter into a payment plan for school fees make sure you budget adequately for rent, food and bills
⇒ Plan school lunches, make your own snacks, buy in bulk
⇒ Cycle to school if there is a good, safe route
⇒ Swap books and uniforms with friends & neighbours
⇒ Reuse stationery—no need to buy them new each year
⇒ Label all school items
⇒ Shop around for sales items rather than expensive brands. Stationery shops may be cheaper than school ordering. Officeworks will price match and give a discount if their advertised price is the more expensive.
⇒ Buy & sell new & used school items online at:
  www.sustainableschoolshop.com.au
  www.angusrobertson.com.au
  www.bookdepository.com
  www.ebay.com.au
  www.gumtree.com.au

Council of Single Mothers and their Children Inc.
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